

## AGRICULTURE

A report on Sanford's economy would be incomplete without a study of the county's first industry, agriculture. Fifty-four percent of the 163,200 acres of land in the county were devoted to agriculture in 1959, much less than the 66 percent in farm land in 1954. Accompanying this decrease in land devoted to agriculture are changes in the number of farms and the size of farms.

Excluding the change in the number of farms due to a change in definition, one out of every four farms in operation in 1954 had gone out of business by 1959. The 1,064 farms remaining were ten acres larger, on an average, with 83 acres per farm. Average value of land and buildings more than doubled, increased to 17 thousand dollars per farm.

As is the case in the State, tenancy is on the decline in the county -- decreasing much faster than the number of farms. Only one farm in four was operated by a tenant in 1959. The number of farms operated by full owners is declining faster than the number of ten-

ants. Another type of farm operator is coming into prominence -- the part owner. 1/ While the number of farms, tenants, and full owners decreased during 1954-1959, the number of part owners increased by 42 percent from 224 to 318.

Only 62 percent (661) of the farms in the county were classified as commercial farms. 2/ in 1959, which means that at least 403 of the farmers (those making less than \$2,500 annually) have a very low level of living if they have no other source of income. More than a third of the commercial farmers (262) work off the farm more than 100 days a year. Thus, more than half of the farmers have or probably would like to have a part-time or full-time job to improve their annual income.

1/ Part owners operate land they own and also land rented from other.

2/ In general all farms with a value of sales amounting to \$2,500 or more are classified as commercial.